

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 and 53 to 58, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a plurality of multifunction network devices on a network, each multifunction network device having a network interface for communication on the network, each multifunction network device further having an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, and each multifunction network device further having a plurality of hardware resources including a storage memory for storing a plurality of function modules which include the function modules for controlling ~~an~~ the image processing apparatus, a program memory for use by the function modules, and a processor for executing each of the function modules, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting a reconfiguration event for one of the plurality of multifunction network devices, wherein the reconfiguration event is triggered internally of said one multifunction device by an increase or a decrease in demand for hardware resources of said multifunction device, and wherein said reconfiguration event is detected over the network;

sending a first reconfiguration command including a deletion command to delete at least one ~~of software modules~~ function module, wherein the first reconfiguration command including the deletion command is sent over the network from an information processing apparatus on the network to said one of the plurality of multifunction network devices corresponding to the reconfiguration event in case that the reconfiguration event is detected in the detecting step in response to the increase of demand for the hardware

resources, and sending a second reconfiguration command to retrieve a deleted ~~software~~ function module by sending the deleted ~~software~~ function module from the information processing apparatus to the multifunction network device via the network to said one of the plurality of multifunction network devices corresponding to the reconfiguration event in case that the reconfiguration event is detected in the detecting step in response to the decrease of the demand for the hardware resources ~~from the software module~~;

first reconfiguring the multifunction network devices by deleting the ~~software~~ function module in said one of the plurality of multifunction network devices in accordance with the first reconfiguration command and sending the ~~software~~ function module to the ~~image~~ information processing apparatus via the network; and

second reconfiguring said one of the plurality of multifunction network devices by retrieving the deleted ~~software~~ function module in the first reconfiguring step from the information processing apparatus on the network in accordance with the second reconfiguration command.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the reconfiguration event is a request for execution of one of the plurality of function modules by the one multifunction network device.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by a configuration module executing in a computing device on the network.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 3, wherein the trigger is set in response to a detection by the configuration module of an increased demand for use of the storage memory and of the program memory in the one multifunction network device.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, wherein the detection by the configuration module of an increased demand for use of the storage memory and of the program memory is based on resource information data which is passed from the one multifunction network device to the configuration module.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the resource information data includes a current utilized amount of the storage memory and a current utilized amount of the program memory of the one multifunction network device.

7. (Original) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the resource information data is passed in an SNMP message from the one multifunction network device to the configuration module.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 3, wherein the trigger is set by the configuration module based on receipt of a request message by the configuration module from the one multifunction network device.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 8, wherein the request message comprises a request by the one multifunction network device for an increased useable capacity of the storage memory and of the program memory in the one multifunction network device.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 8, wherein the request message is passed in an SNMP message from the one multifunction network device to the configuration module.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 3, wherein the configuration module monitors an overall demand for execution of each of the plurality of functions by the plurality of multifunction network devices, and wherein the trigger is set by the configuration module based on a detected increase in the overall demand for execution of one of the plurality of functions.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 11, wherein the configuration module monitors the overall demand for execution of each of the plurality of functions by monitoring a plurality of function request messages which are sent to the plurality of multifunction network devices.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by deleting at least one of the function modules from the storage memory.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by deleting all of the function modules except one designated function module from the storage memory.

15. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by reallocating a designated amount of the program memory for use by each of the function modules.

16. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by instructing an operating system in the one multifunction network device to respond only to a function request message which requests execution of a designated function module.

17. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein in the sending step the reconfiguration command can further be selected from an addition command to add a

designated function module to the storage memory and the program memory of the one multifunction network device.

18. (Original) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by a configuration module executing in a server on the network, and the trigger is based on a detection by the configuration module that the one multifunction device has a decreased demand for use of the storage memory and of the program memory.

19. (Original) A method according to Claim 18, wherein the detection by the configuration module of an decreased demand for use of the storage memory and of the program memory is based on resource information data which is passed from the one multifunction network device to the configuration module.

20. (Original) A method according to Claim 19, wherein the resource information data includes a current utilized amount of the storage memory and a current utilized amount of the program memory of the one multifunction network device.

21. (Original) A method according to Claim 19, wherein the resource information data is passed in an SNMP message from the one multifunction network device to the configuration module.

22. (Original) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by a configuration module executing in a server on the network, and the trigger is based on an expiration of a predetermined time duration which was initiated at a last reconfiguration event for the one multifunction device.

23. (Original) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by a configuration module executing in a server on the network, and the trigger is based on receipt of a request message by the configuration module from the one multifunction network device.

24. (Original) A method according to Claim 23, wherein the request message comprises a request by the one multifunction network device for the addition of at least one function module to the storage memory and to the program memory in the one multifunction network device.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 17, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by a configuration module executing in a server on the network, and the trigger is based on discovery by the configuration module of the one multifunction network device on the network.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 25, wherein the one multifunction network device is discovered by detection of an SNMP announcement message sent over the network by the one multifunction network device.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 17, wherein, in the case that the reconfiguration command is an addition command to add a designated function module to the storage memory and the program memory of the one multifunction network device, the designated function module is downloaded to the one multifunction network device.

28. (Original) A method according to Claim 27, wherein the designated function module is downloaded to the one multifunction network device from a component repository module in response to an instruction from a configuration module.

29. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the component repository module and the configuration module are executing on a same computing device on the network.

30. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the component repository module and the configuration module are executing on a separate respective computing devices on the network.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, wherein the component repository module executes on a server on the network.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 28, wherein a version identification of the designated function module is provided in the instruction from the configuration module to the component repository module.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 32, wherein the version identification is determined in accordance with a preset profile corresponding to the one multifunction network device.

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 33, wherein the preset profile corresponding to the one multifunction network device contains information regarding allowed function modules that can be downloaded to the one multifunction network device and a version identification for each of the allowed function modules.

35. (Original) A method according to Claim 27, wherein the designated function module is downloaded to the one multifunction network device from a component repository module in response to an instruction from the one multifunction network device.

36. (Original) A method according to Claim 35, wherein a version identification of the designated function module is provided in the instruction from the one multifunction network device to the component repository module.

37. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the reconfiguration event is a trigger set by the one multifunction network device based on a determination by the one multifunction network device that there is a need for an increased useable capacity of the storage memory and of the program memory in the one multifunction network device.

38. (Original) A method according to Claim 37, wherein the reconfiguration command is sent internally within the one multifunction network device which is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by deleting all of the function modules except one designated function module from the storage memory and from the program memory.

39. (Original) A method according to Claim 38, wherein the deleted function modules are sent from the one multifunction network device to a component repository on the network, and wherein the deleted modules are subsequently retrieved by the one multifunction network device from the component repository and added to the storage memory and to the program memory.

40. to 43. (Cancelled)

44. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by prohibiting the use of program memory for at least one of the function modules.

45. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the one multifunction network device is reconfigured in accordance with the reconfiguration command by prohibiting the use of program memory for all of the function modules except a designated function module.

46. to 52. (Cancelled)

53. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for controlling performed in an~~ information processing apparatus which includes a network interface for connection to a network, the apparatus having wherein the information processing apparatus includes a storage unit for storing a plurality of ~~software~~ function modules and ~~being~~ is capable of communicating over the network with a plurality of ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network devices, wherein each multifunction network device has an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting a reconfiguration event from at least one of the plurality of multifunction network devices ~~based on a status of use of hardware resources in a plurality of image processing functions of the plurality of software modules in each of the plurality of multifunctional network devices~~ wherein the reconfiguration event is triggered internally of said one multifunction device by an increase or a decrease in demand for hardware resources of said one multifunction network device, and wherein said reconfiguration event is detected over the network;

first sending a deletion command over the network for instructing the deletion of ~~the software module~~ one of the function modules to the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device which sends the reconfiguration event, in case that the reconfiguration event detected by the detecting step is the event indicating a need to delete a specific ~~software function~~ software function module in the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device detected in response to the increase of demand for the hardware resources; and

second sending a requested ~~software function~~ software function module stored in the storage unit over the network to the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device which sends the event, in case that the reconfiguration event detected by the detecting step is the event indicating to request for a specific software function module detected in response to the decrease of demand for the hardware resources.

54. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling a ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device, ~~the device having wherein the multifunction network device~~ includes a network interface for communication on the network, each multifunction

network further having an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, and each multifunction network device further having a plurality of hardware resources including a storage memory including for storing a plurality of software function modules, a program memory to be used by the software function modules, and a plurality of hardware resources for image processing functions including a processor performing the software for executing the function modules module and being capable of communicating with a network, said method comprising the steps of:

determining whether the hardware resources need to be reallocated based on a status of use of the hardware resources by the plurality of ~~software~~ function modules;

first reconfiguring by deleting at least one of the plurality of ~~software~~ function modules and sending the ~~software~~ deleted function module ~~deleted~~ so as to secure the hardware resources in the multifunction network devices, wherein the deleted function module is sent over the network to an information processing apparatus on the network, responsive to a case when the determining step determines that the hardware resources need to be reallocated; and

second reconfiguring the multifunction network devices by retrieving the deleted ~~software~~ function module from the information processing apparatus ~~on~~ over the network in response to a status of use of the hardware resources after the first reconfiguring step.

55. (Currently Amended) An ~~apparatus for controlling an~~ information processing apparatus, ~~having which~~ includes a network interface for connection to a

network, a storage unit for storing a plurality of ~~software-function~~ modules and ~~being~~
~~which is~~ capable of communicating over the network with a plurality of ~~multifunctional~~
~~multifunction~~ network devices, wherein each multifunction network device has an image
processing apparatus with printing and scanning capabilities controlled by function
modules, comprising:

a detector which detects a reconfiguration event from at least one of the
plurality of multifunction network devices based on a status of use of hardware resources
in a plurality of image processing functions of the plurality of software modules in each
said one of the plurality of ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network devices, wherein the
reconfiguration event is triggered internally of said one multifunction network device by an
increase or a decrease in demand for hardware resources of said one multifunction network
device, and wherein said detector detects the reconfiguration event over the network;

instruction means for sending a deletion command over the network for
instructing the deletion of ~~the software module~~ one of the function modules to the
~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device which sends the reconfiguration event, in
case that the detected reconfiguration event detected is the event indicating a need to delete
a specific ~~software-function~~ module in the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device
detected in response to the increase of demand for the hardware resources; and

sending means for sending a requested ~~software-function~~ module stored in
the storage unit over the network to the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device
which sends the event, in case that the detected reconfiguration event is the event

indicating to request for a specific software function module detected in response to the decrease of demand for the hardware resources.

56. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlling a ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device, ~~having wherein the multifunction network device includes a network interface for communication on the network, each multifunction network device further having an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, and each multifunction network device further having a plurality of hardware resources including a storage memory including for storing a plurality of software function modules, a program memory to be used by the software function modules, and a plurality of hardware resources for image processing functions including a processor performing the software for executing the function modules module and being capable of communicating with a network, comprising:~~

determining means for determining whether the hardware resources need to be reallocated based on a status of use of the hardware resources by the plurality of ~~software function~~ modules;

first reconfiguring means for deleting at least one of the plurality of ~~software function~~ modules and sending the ~~software deleted function module deleted~~ so as to secure the hardware resources in the multifunction network devices, wherein the deleted function module is sent over the network to an information processing apparatus on the network, responsive to a case when the determining means determines that the hardware resources need to be reallocated; and

second reconfiguring means for reconfiguring the multifunction network devices by retrieving the deleted ~~software function~~ module from the information processing apparatus ~~on over~~ the network in response to a status of use of the hardware resources.

57. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable memory medium having computer-executable process steps stored thereon for controlling an information processing apparatus, apparatus which includes a network interface for connection to a network, wherein the information processing apparatus includes having a storage unit for storing a plurality of software function modules and being is capable of communicating over the network with a plurality of multifunctional multifunction network devices, wherein each multifunction network device has an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, wherein said process steps comprise:

a detecting step to detect a reconfiguration event from at least one of the plurality of multifunction network devices ~~based on a status of use of hardware resources in a plurality of image processing functions of the plurality of software modules in each of the plurality of multifunctional network devices, wherein the reconfiguration event is triggered internally of said one multifunction network device by an increase or a decrease in demand for hardware resources of said one multifunction network device, and wherein said reconfiguration event is detected over the network;~~

a first sending step to send a deletion command over the network for instructing the deletion of ~~the software module~~ one of the function modules to the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device which sends the reconfiguration event, in

case that the reconfiguration event detected by the detecting step is the event indicating a need to delete a specific ~~software-function~~ module in the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device detected in response to the increase of demand for the hardware resources; and

a second sending step to send a requested ~~software-function~~ module stored in the storage unit over the network to the ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device which sends the event, in case that the reconfiguration event detected by the detecting step is the event indicating to request for a specific software-function module detected in response to the decrease of demand for the hardware resources.

58. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable memory medium having computer-executable process steps stored thereon for controlling a ~~multifunctional~~ multifunction network device, wherein the multifunction network device having includes a network interface for communication on the network, and wherein the multifunction network device has an image processing apparatus with scanning and printing capabilities controlled by function modules, and further has a plurality of hardware resources including a storage memory including for storing a plurality of software-function modules, a program memory to be used by the software-function modules, and a plurality of hardware resources for image processing functions including a processor performing the software for executing the function modules module and being capable of communicating with a network, wherein said process steps comprise:

a determining step to determine whether the hardware resources need to be reallocated based on a status of use of the hardware resources by the plurality of ~~software~~ function modules;

a first reconfiguring step to reconfigure by deleting at least one of the plurality of ~~software~~ function modules and sending the deleted function ~~software~~ module ~~deleted~~ so as to secure the hardware resources in the multifunction network devices, wherein the deleted function module is sent over the network to an information processing apparatus on the network, responsive to a case when the determining step determines that the hardware resources need to be reallocated; and

second reconfiguring step to reconfigure the multifunction network devices by retrieving the deleted ~~software~~ function module from the information processing apparatus ~~on~~ over the network in response to a status of use of the hardware resources after the first reconfiguring step.